



# ARMY MARKETING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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2020-2022 | 2023-2025 | 2026-2028

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FINAL // UNCLASS // FOUO

*The American people and their elected representatives expect the U.S. Army to be the world's premier land combat force. While the Air Force and Navy are more platform-centric, people are the Army's most valuable resource and chief source of competitive advantage. This is why the **2020 Army People Strategy** makes acquiring talent its main effort through 2028. Effective marketing is critical to that effort. It enables the Army to acquire the Soldier and Civilian talent needed to achieve Total Army readiness, to employ that talent, and to retain it as well.*

*Marketing, however, does not provide instantaneous results. In an Army context, marketing must, over time, **eliminate widely held misperceptions** regarding service cost and benefits which can impede the flow of the right talent into our ranks. In other words, Army Marketing's purpose is to build awareness, set expectations for those who would serve, and shape their preferences for opportunities within the Total Army by communicating our:*

- **Employment brand** – who we are, what we do, what we value, and what type of people thrive with us, and our;*
- **Employee value proposition** – the true benefits of Army service versus the costs. This spread between costs and benefits is the **consumer value**. When this is positive, the Army becomes an employer of choice to those we want on our team.*

*To do this successfully, the Army must employ a different marketing approach than it has in the past. While today's hyper-competitive labor market certainly presents us with new challenges, it also **presents us with tremendous new marketing opportunities**, provided that our marketing is innovative, integrated, data-driven, and multidisciplinary. Our efforts must draw upon the latest insights not just from marketing, but from behavioral economics, the social sciences, the human resources field, and the decision-making sciences.*

*In sum, this Army Marketing Implementation Plan is carefully aligned to the goals of both the Army Strategy and Army People Strategy, which include attracting and retaining talented young American men and women critical to fielding the **Multi-Domain Operations-capable force** needed in 2028 and beyond.*

## What is Marketing?

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines **marketing** as “a set of activities, institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” Marketing must be tightly aligned to an organization’s enterprise strategy – presenting the right line of products, in the right place, to the right target customer, at the right time to influence a customer decision.

In contrast, a **brand** presents the identity and competitive advantages of an organization. The AMA defines a brand as “a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.”

**I. INTRODUCTION** – This *Army Marketing Implementation Plan* supports the *Army People Strategy* and presents the marketing environment, approach, and principles that will guide **Total Army Marketing** in the 21st century, to include **all military and civilian** accessions. This milestones-based plan is focused on FYs 2020-2022 for implementation and FYs 2023-2028 for planning, programming, and budgeting.

**Appendix A** presents specific strategically aligned marketing objectives and supporting tasks for incorporation into the *Army People Strategy Military Implementation Plan (APS-MIP)*. **Appendix B** presents objectives and supporting tasks for the *Civilian Implementation Plan (APS-CIP)*.

The preponderance of Army Marketing efforts support **APS Line of Effort 1: Acquire Talent**, particularly **Objective 1-1 – Market the Army**. Marketing, however, is a cross-cutting activity, with implications for how the Army **recruits** and **onboards** new talent, as well as for how it **Develops**, **Employs**, and **Retains** it. As a result, some Army Marketing tasks will, over time, align with and support other *APS-MIP/CIP* objectives, Lines of Effort (LOEs), or Critical Enablers (CEs).

Regardless of alignment, each Army Marketing task in Appendices A and B:

- Identifies the task’s **purpose** and desired **end-state**
- Identifies time-bound **milestones**, **events**, and **decision points** en route to that end-state
- Includes specific **outcomes** with associated success **metrics** and **goals** for increased speed, quality, cost, or other indicators appropriate to the task

Marketing must maintain alignment with an organization's strategy in order to create a competitive advantage. Therefore, Army Marketing's **mission** is to:

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***Increase MDO-capable talent acquisition and retention through improved positioning of the Army employment brand and employee value proposition.***

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Our **vision for the future** is:

- *An **employment brand** that clearly communicates the Army's outstanding **corporate, workplace, and social reputation**, all of which influence employer choice, as well as social and governmental support.*
- *An **employee value proposition** that clearly communicates the Army's competitive advantage relative to other potential employers, helping us to **acquire and retain** people whose **talents are aligned** with those demanded by the Army Strategy.*
- *Increased marketing **efficiency and effectiveness** that: eliminates principle-agent problems and unnecessary duplicative spending; increases retention, particularly of talented first-term enlisted Soldiers; reduces recruiter requirements; and allows the reallocation of accession resources to dramatically **improve return on investments**.*
- *A community of marketing professionals epitomizing all the strengths of a **learning culture: data-driven** decision-making; proactive **problem-solving**; a diverse, **forward-looking** mindset; **open and transparent** communications; and **reflective** practice – the precursors to **innovation**.*

**II. MARKETING ENVIRONMENT** – The contemporary marketing environment is more complex, fast-paced, competitive, and data-driven than ever before. These environmental factors present Army Marketing with **incredible opportunities to innovate and outcompete** other organizations for American talent. Capitalizing on these opportunities, however, requires viewing these environmental factors through a new lens:

- A. Economic** – The U.S. unemployment rate was recently at or near its lowest level in over 50 years. Yet, recent economic conditions have swiftly changed, emphasizing the need for the Army's accessions to be able to quickly adapt to diverse economic environments. And despite the recent tightness of the labor

market, Gens Y and Z together approach the Baby Boomer generation in size. This means that there is a sufficiently large pool of potential recruits. Regardless of the economic conditions, competitors for talent will continue to use innovative efforts to find the best people, requiring the Army to identify and develop several sources of its **competitive advantage** in the American labor market:

1. To compete, companies are increasingly offering a range of total rewards that includes full healthcare, continuing education opportunities, and other benefits, yet most cannot match the scope and value of the Army's total rewards programs, particularly for 18-to-24-year-olds.

2. About 70% of the 16-to-24-year-old labor market attends college. The increase in college attendance has also increased the number of students with college debt.<sup>1</sup> This compounds for those who accumulate "some college."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, young people are increasingly seeking alternatives to accruing debt<sup>3</sup> or options for quickly retiring it.

#### Student Loan Debt

As of 2019, Americans have \$1.5 trillion in student loans. This far exceeds debt from automobiles or credit cards. The average 18-24 years old borrower has almost \$15,000 in debt. The average size of debt more than doubles to \$33,500 for those 25-34 years old. Almost 4 million Americans under the age of 35 have student loans that exceed \$40,000.

Source: Dept of Education

3. The "some college" population is often more mature, more educated, and thus more capable of multi-domain operations than the average high school student, making them excellent potential Soldiers or civilian employees.
4. The "gig" economy, in which young people value **continuous employability over continuous employment**, results in high job churn among 18-24-year-olds. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average 22-year-old has held 4.6 jobs; furthermore, the average person has held **7.8 jobs by the time**

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<sup>1</sup> In 2019 the average college student loan balance was approximately \$35,000, with nearly 40% of borrowers having loan balances less than \$10,000.

<sup>2</sup> "In 2018, the employment rate was highest for young adults with a bachelor's or higher degree (86%). The employment rate for young adults with some college (79%) was higher than the rate for those who had completed high school (72%), which was, in turn, higher than the employment rate for those who had not completed high school (59%)." Source: *National Center for Education Statistics*

<sup>3</sup> Over the past 8 years, college enrollment has decreased ~11%. See: "Fewer Students Are Going to College. Here's Why That Matters," *Morning Edition*, National Public Radio

**they are 30.**<sup>4</sup> The Army's employment model, education benefits, and transportable retirement system gives the Army an advantage with a labor force looking for employers that invest in employees and their future employment, whether it is within the Army or after their time in service.

These developments and trends present the Army with **more rather than fewer opportunities** to successfully compete for talent, particularly with the "college / some college" population. It is fair to say that the Army's tremendous employee value proposition places it in perhaps its **most advantageous position ever**, provided we employ innovative marketing approaches that translate and transmit our value proposition to prospective employees and their influencers.

**B. Reputational** – Studies suggest that all three components of brand reputation (corporate, workplace, and social) matter in recruiting and retention.<sup>5</sup> In fact, 69% of people report that they would not take a job with an employer with a poor reputation, even if they were actively looking for a job.<sup>6</sup> The Army's **corporate reputation** (overall recognition and regard) remains high across the country and makes its Soldiers and veterans the beneficiaries of significant social respect (discounts and other benefits from public, private, and non-profit entities). However, both its **workplace reputation** (heavily associated with its employment brand) and its **social reputation** (important to Generations Y and Z) are less competitive.<sup>7</sup> Several factors explain this:

### **1. Workplace Reputation Factors.**

**(a)** Young people have a **decreasing personal connection** to someone with military service, and fewer key influencers advocate for it. Just 12% of American youth believe they have a lot in common with military service people, and only 15% of them have a parent who served in the military, down from 40% in 1995.<sup>8</sup> This contributes to the **inaccurate perceived**

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<sup>4</sup> "Americans at Age 31: Labor Market Activity, Education and Partner Status Summary," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 17, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Auger, P., Devinney, T. M., Dowling, G. R., Eckert, C., & Perm-Ajcharyawong, N. "The Value of a Corporate, Workplace, and Social Reputation to Potential Executive Employees," *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2011, No. 1, pp. 1-5). Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510: Academy of Management.

<sup>6</sup> "50 HR & Recruiting Stats That Make You Think," GlassDoor, January 2015.

<sup>7</sup> A 2019 study by JAMRS showed that many American youth perceive that they could not succeed in the military because of boot camp, combat, getting the job they want, or succeed in the Army's structured environment. They also do not see the military as allowing them to be in contact with friends and family or have an attractive lifestyle. Source: JAMRS Youth Poll, September 2019.

<sup>8</sup> *The U.S. Army Landscape Review*, Team DDB, 07FEB20

**costs of Army service.** Studies indicate that Americans often associate veterans with combat, difficulty adjusting to civilian life, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder, despite the fact that the vast majority of veterans leave the service more mature, healthy, and educated.<sup>9</sup> The remedy for this is to communicate the **Army's culture of wellness and self-improvement**, which is more mature and robust than that of many organizations.

- (b) In the “gig economy,” jobs are often transitory. Meanwhile, Army service is inaccurately perceived as requiring a life-long commitment, a perception reinforced by much of its culture and its artifacts. The reality, however, is that the Army needs much of its workforce to sign up for a limited “gig” only. Even its Total Rewards have been adjusted in this direction. For example, the Army's new Soldier retirement savings (portable 401k) with employer-matching and post 9-11 GI Bill with housing stipend provide **unmatched portable benefits**. Combined with the Army's Transition Assistance Program, Veteran employment initiatives, and Yellow Ribbon tuition programs, the **Army already possesses the programs and investments** that Army Marketing can use to attract “gig workers.”

### The Army as an Employer

Recent surveys show:

The military is America's most trusted institution (*Gallup*, 2018)

The Army is first in civilian employee satisfaction within DoD (*Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey*, 2019)

The Army is the #7 large employer in federal employee satisfaction (*Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey*, 2019)

- (c) The Army's legally mandated grade / pay structured compensation design presents a perception of **wage fairness with broad appeal**. Studies indicate that individuals make two separate types of fairness judgments relevant to compensation satisfaction. One relates to what they are paid relevant to another (distributive justice), whereas the other concerns how those decisions are made (procedural justice).<sup>10</sup> While many employers in the U.S. continue to confront the persistent wage gap for women and

<sup>9</sup> Peer reviewed article forthcoming in the journal of *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process*. Summary available at: <https://www.fuqua.duke.edu/duke-fuqua-insights/how-military-service-can-hurt-some-job-seekers%E2%80%99-prospects>

<sup>10</sup> Tremblay, M., Sire, B., & Balkin, D. B. (1998). The role of organizational justice in pay and employee benefit satisfaction, and its effects on work attitudes. *Group & Organization Management*, 25(3), 269-290.

minorities, the transparent and equitable nature of the Army’s total rewards system gives it a talent acquisition and retention advantage.<sup>11</sup>

(d) Marketing has a critical role to play in corporate crisis response incidents. For example, Facebook emphasized its people-connecting power in response to media reports that its algorithms support divisive behavior, and Amazon began running employee testimonials on television after controversial reports of warehouse work conditions. Similarly, family housing failures, SHARP, and elevated suicide rates can have long-lasting effects on the Army’s reputation. While Senior Leaders and PAOs must manage near term crisis effects, Army Marketing must help rebuild its brand and value propositions over the long term.

2. **Social Reputation Factors.** Today’s youth are less motivated by monetary incentives and more focused on the **meaning of their work** than previous

<p><b>The Army – a Force for Social Good</b></p> <p>50% reduction in volatile organics and toxic pollution emissions in the last decade</p> <p>Generates thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in local economic activity across the U.S.</p> <p>National energy resilience leader – produces 24% of the nation’s hydroelectric power</p> <p>Supplies water to 115 American cities</p> <p>Protects wetlands, restores ecosystems</p>	<p>generations. One study noted that Generation Z “will actively be seeking organizations with values that align with their personal beliefs and value systems.”<sup>12</sup> They want to <b>make a difference in the world around them and seek out employers demonstrating high Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</b>.<sup>13</sup> The Army can appeal to these</p>
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intrinsic motivators by effectively marketing the tens of thousands of person-hours it devotes annually to initiatives with CSR messaging potential (for example, Army recycling efforts, energy efficiency / LEED certifications, volunteerism with youth organizations, preservation of historic sites, support to civil and educational institutions, disaster relief, infrastructure efforts, toy drives, volunteerism, charitable giving, etc.). Not many organizations fight

<sup>11</sup> The Expanding Gender Earnings Gap: Evidence from the LEHD-2000 Census, AER 2017

<sup>12</sup> This study found that “60% of employees want their jobs to positively impact society. 67% of employees expect their employers to have a greater purpose and that their job contributes to societal change.” See *The U.S. Army Landscape Review*, Team DDB, 07FEB20.

<sup>13</sup> Bauman, C. W., & Skitka, L. J. (2012). Corporate social responsibility as a source of employee satisfaction. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 32, 63-86.



fires, respond to natural disasters, educate children, protect historic sites, deliver babies, generate clean energy, etc. These activities could help communicate to Gens Y and Z that the Army is not just a combat force, but a **force for social good**.

**C. Communications** – The pace of societal and technological transformations has changed how people research and experience brands. Social media dominates marketing considerations, but many other trends are equally or more important. Much of the younger market no longer watches traditional network cable TV; instead, they consume shows through streaming networks such as Hulu, Netflix, AppleTV, Disney+, YouTube, among many others. They are also skeptical of marketing and wary of gimmicks. Trained since birth, they are adept at looking past traditional advertising such as billboards, skipping TV commercials, and blocking online ad content. Modern advertising is **mutually participatory**. Marketing is increasingly interactive and takes advantage of mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality, and gaming. In 2006, The Army pioneered interactive marketing with its development and launch of *America's Army*,<sup>14</sup> which used online gaming to inform people about the Army. Today, even traditional modes of entertainment are opportunities for exchanging information -- **podcasts** and **museums** (both of which **tell stories**) incorporate experiential and interactive learning.<sup>15,16</sup> The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art is an example of the opportunity for museums to combine the digital with the traditional to create an immersive environment: “[Museums] have an important role to play in helping people explore and understand the emerging hybrid culture...It's this strange moment of change...And digital space is increasingly another space we live in.”<sup>17</sup>

Another emerging trend is **Esports**, which is drawing billions of dollars from investors and advertisers due to the broad-reaching audience. In 2018, more people watched the Esports' League of Legends final (99.6 million viewers) than

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<sup>14</sup> This refers to the video game developed and published by the U.S. Army, intended to inform, educate, and recruit prospective Soldiers. It is an innovative, immersive first-person shooter game and has earned numerous awards.

<sup>15</sup> The Resurgence of Audio and Museums in Entertainment: Harvard Business School Professor Mihir Desai recently noted “Museums are seeing a little bit of a resurgence... [museums] are doing well because they are harnessing digital...The audio guides are now fantastic...They're experiencing this as you are experiencing it... I just think there is a whole set of possibilities for museums to use digital. In particular, audio guides are a fertile area...I think this is really exciting for museums in the future.” HBS Professor Youngme Moon added “I think we're in the middle of an absolute rediscovery and reinvention of audio as a communication medium.” Source: “TikTok, Museums, the Audio Explosion, and Other Trends in Entertainment,” (Podcast), *Harvard Business School After Hours*

<sup>16</sup> In 2013, only about 10% of the U.S. population listened to podcasts. Today, over 30% of the U.S. population listens to them monthly and 80% listen to all or most of an episode. Source: “2020 Podcast Stats & Facts (New Research from Jan 2020),” *Podcast Insights*, Feb 07, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Lohr, Steve, “Museums Morph Digitally,” *The New York Times*, October 23, 2014.

watched the Super Bowl. Brands that were slow to adapt to this trend in an effective way are investing millions of dollars to break into this space.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, the most **effective advertising** is done by **early-adopting** organizations that are **constantly innovating**, adapting to new technologies and consumer trends, and using data to identify opportunities and abandon dead ends early.

- D. Authorities** – The Army’s marketing authorities are broad with many facets still unexplored in terms of current and emerging technologies and marketing methods. Army Marketing will **expand its purview to include education and information**. Marketing should inform the American people about its Army, its mission, its opportunities, and its Soldiers. Education begins with **public outreach** and **youth programs** such as Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) or exposure to the **Army Field Band**, which seek to inform all ages about the Army and the service it provides to society. ASA M&RA will **update regulation** and **revise policy** to enable Army Marketing to more effectively capture, store, and share information, such as “aging-in” rising market populations for recruiting, collaborating with college financial offices, and directly marketing Army monetary and non-monetary compensation. Army Marketing and the ASA M&RA will coordinate with the CIO-G6, JAMRS, DoD data and privacy entities, and affiliated legal and policy proponents to update and revise Army and DoD regulations to support educating and informing in order to compete in the market for talent.

**III. ARMY MARKETING APPROACH** – Today’s accessions and socio-economic environment presents both challenges and opportunities. It requires the Army to use **new approaches** commensurate with other leading competitors for talent. Army Marketing will apply the following forward-looking principles to all marketing efforts.

- A. Curate experience by segment** – **Employ a segmented approach aimed at multiple populations – in-market, rising market, in-service, and their influencers.** To engage in an effectively focused marketing approach, we must refine our knowledge of potential talent through segmentation. The Army’s marketing approach must consider first, what talents the Army needs, and then develop tailored approaches to reach each of these populations. This is done by

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<sup>18</sup> Ryan, Carol, “Brands Reach for a Gaming Console: Bud Light is the latest global company to use video games to target young consumers,” Wall Street Journal, May 1, 2019.

grouping eligible populations based on certain similarities that facilitate the delivery of the appropriate message, in the right channel, at the right time. Not every marketing effort or market segment involves advertising. Much of the Army's efforts will include **educating** the public about the true benefits and requirements of Army service. An example of this is educating the rising market through well-positioned **JROTC programs and curriculum** that support the development of general wellness and wide-ranging talents.

### The Role of JROTC

According to 10 U.S.C., the purpose of JROTC is "to instill in students in U.S. secondary educational institutions the value of citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment." The Army has over 1,700 JROTC programs in American high schools.

JROTC is not a recruiting program; rather it is designed to educate and equip American youth with the skills necessary to be successful in the future. The FY20 NDAA authorizes JROTC to teach science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), in addition to leadership, ethics, civics, history, health, and wellness. A byproduct of JROTC programs is education of students and faculty about *their* Army regardless of their future interest in Army service.

Source: *Defense Primer: Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps*, January 2020.

- B. Develop data-driven marketing plans – Use marketing theory guided by behavioral economics and sciences to design and implement marketing plans.** Well-conceived marketing strategies and plans must be based on marketing theory and decision-making sciences. The Army Audit Agency (AAA) recommended the Army "assess the effectiveness and efficiency of all Army Marketing and advertising efforts."<sup>19</sup> Analysis of **marketing effectiveness** must be **outcomes-focused** – the value of returns relative to cost. To do this, the Army must embrace **marketing theory** with relevant **marketing data** based on a unique understanding of marketing and business analytical metrics. A logical examination of the *Customer, Collaborators, Competition, Context, and Company* will help leaders define the marketing problem and make rational, cost-effective marketing decisions. Army Marketing must accurately **define the purpose** of various marketing efforts (generate awareness v. interest, etc.) and assess these efforts using well-designed **experiments and causal inference** to determine the return on marketing investments locally and nationally. "Return on Investment" must be **reliant on hurdle rates** and **metrics of success** established before launching marketing initiatives. Leaders must conduct outcome-based analysis

<sup>19</sup> Recommendation #3, "The Army's Marketing and Advertising Program, Return on Investment (A-2018-0036-MTH)," Army Audit Agency, 2018.

regularly and direct resources toward the most effective efforts and those that are innovative and demonstrate strong future potential.

### **Data Driven Marketing**

A marketing intern nervously presented the latest numbers on the company's nationwide advertising campaign. Due to a contracting hiccup, the advertising had failed to run in Pittsburgh and Austin. Thankfully, the sales numbers in those two cities didn't look any different from the rest. The CEO looked pleased. Having dodged a bullet, the intern shared his advertising mistake proudly stating, "However, we learned that the mistake did not negatively affect sales." The CEO sunk in his chair and corrected the intern. "What we have just learned is that our national advertising material is not effective."

Effective marketing requires constant evaluation of effectiveness. Modern marketing makes use of carefully constructed experiments (A/B testing, staggered rollout, and geo splitting), detailed data collection plans, and econometric techniques to produce causal estimates of marketing effectiveness and ROI. These experiments allow for the creation and testing of different marketing materials that can be evaluated for effectiveness and inform the direction of Army Marketing.

- C. Employ a "line of professions" approach – Use a house of brands or hybrid brand architecture approach that highlights the entire experiential product line encapsulated within the Army's brand and sub-brands.** Because of the 150+ career specialties within the Army, multiplied by experiential opportunities, the Army is offering an **entire line of products** buttressed by many sub-brands. A few examples of these sub-brands include Special Forces, the 101st Airborne, the 1st Cavalry Division, West Point, the Old Guard, or the Army Reserve or National Guard among many others. Experiential opportunities include helping to solve global challenges such as the Ebola or COVID-19 crises, deploying for combat operations in Afghanistan, helping with hurricane relief in Haiti, or working alongside NATO allies in Europe. The variety of career opportunities includes everything from pilots, doctors, scientists, infantry, cavalry, artillery, chaplains, lawyers, project managers, logisticians, teachers, and others. The combination of these factors results in an entire product line that can be **curated for the individual**, presenting value for the Soldier or Civil Servant and the Army.
- D. Communicate the value proposition – Address cumulative societal perceptions about Army service.** These defined, narrow, and sometimes misleading cognitive associations create an opportunity for the Army to better define its market positioning going forward. It is the job of Army Marketing to

accurately present the requirements and benefits of Army service. Truth in advertising will result in future recruits realizing that many of their perceptions of costs are completely wrong or overstated. It is also the responsibility of Army Marketing to increase the perceived benefits of Army service by showing the often overlooked or misunderstood benefits (medical care, education, retirement, tax advantage, transition assistance, veteran benefits). The Army must identify and recognize its competition for talent and position itself accordingly by identifying a value proposition which many organizations cannot match. As potential Total Army recruits and Civilians become better informed about the requirements and benefits of Army service, the talent alignment of Soldiers and Civilians will improve. Recent statistics show that children of military members create an overwhelming percent of future recruits – 79% of Army recruits have a family member who served.<sup>20</sup> This demonstrates that those most-informed about military service understand its extremely competitive value proposition. Better marketing of this value will result in a larger, more informed base of future recruits, ultimately resulting in cost savings for the Army on many dimensions.

### **Changing someone's mind is difficult – and takes time**

First impressions matter. “Consumers make quick, intuitive decisions—usually within five to 10 seconds — and rarely reflect on whether their decisions were good or bad.” Once a decision is made, however, changing a consumer's mind takes many interactions often spanning months or years. Cost effective marketing therefore seeks to engage potential consumers early, potentially years before a buy decision, in order to create positive first impressions.

Sources: Conick, Hal, “Read This Story to Learn How Behavioral Economics Can Improve Marketing”

#### **E. Measure marketing investments – Identify and develop metrics that provide intermediate feedback while focusing on long-term marketing investments.**

AAA recommended that Army Marketing “Assess the cost-effectiveness of current marketing and advertising efforts and discontinue efforts that aren't cost-effective in comparison to other options.”<sup>21</sup> This Implementation Plan calls for more than a simplistic analysis to determine cost-effectiveness. Meeting the strategic outcome of LOE 1 requires finding high-potential leads that result in an Army that represents the diversity of the American population it serves. This naturally creates a competitive and talented Army. **The number of leads is not**

<sup>20</sup> The U.S. Army Landscape Review, Team DDB, Feb 07, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Recommendation #4, “The Army's Marketing and Advertising Program, Return on Investment (A-2018-0036-MTH),” Army Audit Agency, 2018.

**as important as the *potential and talent* of those leads.** Truth in advertising ensures future Soldiers continue to learn relevant and accurate information about the Army, leading to more satisfied Soldiers. Satisfaction results in less attrition, which is a natural cost savings for the Army and captures intangible benefits by retaining experienced leaders.

While leads create immediate data points, they are not a good metric for measuring marketing effectiveness when referenced in isolation. In fact, fewer but better leads allow recruiters to focus time and efforts on those who are better qualified and are more likely to complete their first term as a Soldier. Presenting these potential future Soldiers with accurate information contributes to this. While this Implementation Plan focuses mostly on marketing, the Army is also modernizing its recruiter selection processes and incentives. This will ensure quality leads generated by marketing efforts result in well-informed recruits who ultimately become satisfied and contributing members of the Army Team. The Army is aligning incentives for recruiters to achieve this outcome by awarding partial credit and partial payment of recruiter incentive pay to recruiters when a new recruit ships to initial entry training (IET), additional credit and incentive pay when a new recruit completes IET, and full credit and incentive pay when a recruit completes a year of service in their first unit. This approach will align marketing efforts to provide quality leads with recruiter incentives, ultimately fulfilling the Army's goal of finding talent who will excel as Soldiers.

- F. Create cross-marketing opportunities – Create a nationally guided, integrated and curated general support construct to provide desired marketing effects to accessions commanders while integrating data and messaging across accessions missions.**<sup>22</sup> Army Marketing should provide *Total Army* accessions commanders and directors with **effects-based capabilities** that include marketing strategy, content creation, content delivery, and marketing analytics. Army Marketing will provide regional expertise based on the tastes, preferences, and psychographics of the Americans living within their area of support. Regional marketing teams will assist commanders in developing data-driven annual marketing plans that seek to achieve established **hurdle rates** for returns on marketing investments, while ensuring synchronization across commands in the region and integration with the national

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<sup>22</sup> “General Support comes in contrast to Direct Support. Direct Support is a relationship requiring an element to support another specific element and to answer directly to that supported element's request for assistance. An organization assigned a direct support relationship has its priorities of support established by the supported element. General Support is given to the supported force as a whole and not to any particular sub-element. Units assigned a General Support relationship are positioned and have priorities established by their parent units.” *Army Field Manual 6-0*

marketing strategy. This creates natural opportunities to **cross-market the “line of professions”** to facilitate **better market matches**. Army Marketing will provide this capability to enhance the missions of accessions commanders and address some of the previous oversights in integration highlighted by recent audits.

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***Hurdle Rates*** - the minimum return on investment (ROI) an organization wants to earn when investing in a project.

Leaders establish hurdle rates to help guide investment decisions. Investments, such as a marketing campaign or regional advertising initiative, must be projected to meet a minimum rate of return in order gain approval. Once approved, metrics are established to measure the actual ROI of the investment to determine its effectiveness. New ideas are encouraged, so long as their expected reward outweighs the potential risk of ineffectiveness.

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**G. Market internally – Create an internal marketing plan that effectively communicates the Army’s employment brand and employee value proposition to existing employees, both Soldiers and DA Civilians.** Internal marketing efforts are an increasingly popular and effective fixture of innovative corporate marketing and are used to improve retention, shift culture, and to activate the leadership’s agenda. If, for example, the CSA has a “People First” message, Army Marketing can help communicate the concrete aspects of that commitment to the Army’s workforce. This also helps clarify the “line of professions” available to current team members as their preferences change. Retaining Soldiers who serve beyond their first term both reduces accessions requirements and maintains valued talent within the Total Army. Soldiers serving on Active Duty, or conversely, in the reserve components, may find satisfaction in the other and choose to make a transition. An internal marketing plan also provides an opportunity to inform Soldiers of the benefits of Army service, many of which often go overlooked to Soldiers’ detriment. Some examples include monetary savings opportunities in the Blended Retirement System, use of the Thrift Savings Plan (and its associated Roth option), or options regarding the use of the Post 9-11 GI Bill. Internal marketing to educate and inform Soldiers and DA Civilians about these opportunities **increases the value of Army service** at little cost to the Army, providing significant benefits to the workforce.

**IV. IMPLEMENTATION** – The *Army Marketing Implementation Plan* provides specific guidance in order to properly resource Army Marketing. This is an entrepreneurial venture and requires an entirely new regional marketing focus and governance structure

that is commensurate with that of a large national or multi-national company. The following marketing tasks will be pursued from 2020-2028 in support of **APS-MIP/CIP LOE 1 – ACQUIRE: OBJECTIVE 1.1 – Market the Army / Market Civilian Service**. Specific implementation details for the MIP for the 2020-2022 timeframe are in Appendix A. Appendix B contains details for the Civilian Implementation plan for the same 2020-2022 timeframe.

**A. Acquire Marketing Talent** – Army Directive 2019-25 and General Order 2019-18 established the Office of the Chief, Army Enterprise Marketing (AEMO) and FA58 (Army Enterprise Marketing and Behavioral Economics) to create an organization with the expertise, capabilities, and mandate to conduct modern enterprise marketing. The creation of AEMO and FA58 allows the Army to acquire, develop, employ and retain the marketing talent needed to deliver a cutting-edge marketing capability commensurate with one of the nation’s largest brands – the U.S. Army. To accomplish this, AEMO and the Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA - FA58 Proponent) will:

- 1. Continue to establish and develop Functional Area 58** – through FY26, OEMA will expand FA58 from its present size to support approximately 100 officers well-suited for Army Marketing. These officers should possess a top-tier graduate degree in marketing (such as an MBA) or have significant prior private sector experience in the field or possess talents critical to the success of Army Marketing (such as the creative arts or business analytics). OEMA will ensure these officers **stay abreast of industry best practices** in marketing throughout their career via executive education, industry training / certification courses (i.e., “short courses” per AR 621-1), or industry conferences.
- 2. Acquire and develop civilian marketing talent** – AEMO will conduct competitive hiring processes to find Department of the Army Civilians who possess marketing and other professional talents critical to the success of Army Marketing.

**B. Build a nationally-guided, regionally integrated Total Army marketing system** – AEMO and OEMA will work in partnership to establish a marketing infrastructure down to the regional level that provides marketing general support to accessions commanders and directors. Army Marketing will create and manage the intellectual capital and marketing expertise that allows the accessions enterprise to **access effects-based marketing capabilities** and



focus those against Army problems. To accomplish this:

1. **Align Army Marketing to ensure regional integration of marketing strategies and advertising content across diverse sectors of the country.** The Accessions Enterprise and Army Marketing have a mutually supportive mission to acquire talent. A regional support marketing structure will provide **general support** for all components of the Accessions Enterprise to include the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), United States Army Cadet Command (USACC), United States Military Academy, Army Special Operations Forces, Training and Doctrine Command, Army National Guard (ARNG), United States Army Reserve, and Civilian Human Resources Army. Marketing must provide commanders with data-driven marketing plans that ensure returns to marketing investments. Regionally aligned marketing teams supporting accessions commanders are responsible for ensuring marketing **money spent within their region is tied to realistic, meaningful, and measurable goals** driven by hurdle rates.
2. **Revise AR 601-208 (Army Marketing Program) to reflect changes to the Army's marketing operations and business model.** ASA M&RA will provide the necessary updates needed to reflect the changes to Army Marketing's operating construct and integration with the accessions enterprise. Revisions should specifically address AAA's recommendation to "revise the Army's marketing performance framework so that it integrates and leverages marketing and advertising efforts at both national and local levels."

**C. Acquire necessary resources** – To implement the Army Marketing structure described above and engage in the marketing practices required by the Army People Strategy, AEMO will resource the following:

1. **A modern marketing data infrastructure** – The Army needs a robust and connected system to collect accessions data. This was a key finding of recent audit reports which highlighted the Army's previously fragmented marketing apparatus. The segmentation required to engage in effective and efficient marketing requires data and analysis. It is imperative Army Marketing bring to the forefront the best-in-industry data and analysis practices to facilitate the accurate and useful segmentation of the market. AEMO will establish the data and information technology infrastructure required to **accurately measure and assess** returns to marketing investments down to the local level (in conjunction with the accessions enterprise)

## Benefits of Integrated Marketing Data

How a Soldier joins the Army is an important question for the Army to answer in order to determine how to best spend its money related to finding and recruiting new Soldiers. Many traditional approaches to recruiting have involved presentations by recruiters at schools or traditional outreach methods. However, today's youth gain information in new ways. Data collection efforts by JAMRS and DDB show that many of the traditional recruiting methods are becoming less effective.

Recent surveys have emphasized two points: 1) most recruits consider joining the Army long before any interactions with a recruiter – marketing sets the stage for these future recruiter-recruit interactions, and 2) most of the Army's current marketing data collection and tracking efforts are insufficient for mapping the "customer experience journey" to understand what resonates and a recruit's decision making process. For example, a recent report by JAMRS showed that only 18% of new recruits had their interest triggered by a school presentation. Before speaking with a recruiter for the first time, 63% of new recruits reported speaking with family or friend, and 30% reported visiting the Army's website. DDB noted, "Younger generations view the real world through social media. Their beliefs and values are learned, shared, and discussed as memes and videos." The establishment of a regionally integrated system providing general support to the accessions enterprise allows the Army to more effectively tie marketing efforts to data. Marketing analytics will help the Army to quickly identify trends, explore new ways to connect with future Soldiers and their influencers, and shift marketing funds to initiatives that meet increasing hurdle rates.

Sources: "Active Duty New Recruit Survey," JAMRS, October 2019, and "The U.S. Army Landscape Review," Team DDB. 07FEB20

**2. Evaluate the optimal form of regional integration infrastructure –** AEMO with the assistance of OEMA, Team DDB, and other marketing experts, will test and evaluate a regional integration structure, based on marketing geographic and psychographic considerations. Capability should be structured to provide **general support** for all Army Marketing requirements, including the Accessions Enterprise. Army Marketing should anticipate that this structure and associated relationships will adapt as the new marketing systems are implemented. Army Marketing will continuously evaluate the effectiveness of these systems **based on data** and recommend future changes that ensure an **optimal long-term marketing infrastructure**.

**D. Innovate and explore new ideas –** Army Marketing will evaluate the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods while aggressively experimenting and **piloting new ideas** and **exploring emerging trends**. To accomplish this, AEMO must not only consider the message it is delivering, but the channels through which it delivers that message. Decisions and planned **investments** will be based on **sound research, hurdle rates, and careful analysis**. Army

Marketing must devote attention and resources to the development of cutting-edge solutions that address **over-the-horizon talent acquisition challenges**. Some of these approaches will include:

1. **Explore means to integrate national, regional, and local approaches to marketing.** Current Army Marketing has coordination and synchronization challenges across national and local efforts. Army Marketing will explore effective means to measure and optimize resources expended, collect data, and implement outcome-based metrics (hurdle rates) across all marketing activities.
2. **Curate and advance the Army's brand.** The Army and its units have developed tremendous brand equity over centuries, but it does not always translate to attracting Soldiers and the best talent. Army Marketing must curate, evolve, and advance the Army's brand platforms to communicate the talent needs and opportunities within the Total Army.
3. **Leverage virtual and digital channels** – Marketing efforts are increasingly shifting to the virtual realm because that is where many of those eligible for service in the Total Army obtain information and interact with others. Using virtual channels often has a far greater reach than other traditional paid channels and is usually much more cost-efficient. This includes paid and unpaid social media interactions. However, virtual connections must be **authentic, relatively unfiltered, and interactive**. Trends in digital marketing are evolving fast and require devoted attention from Marketing Officers to keep pace. Consequently, Army Marketing will **continue to explore and expand** the Army's presence in the digital and virtual realm, collecting and sharing insights across the enterprise to ensure integration and efficiency of effort.

4. **Right-size efforts in traditional channels.** A virtual focus does not mean Army Marketing will abandon traditional channels more commonly used in mass marketing approaches. Rather, it will use traditional marketing channels when they present a **strategic opportunity** and can be tied to specific expected returns. For example, marketing will **efficiently use linear television and Out-of-Home (e.g. billboards, bus wraps, etc.)**, driven by ROI and associated hurdle rates. Recent research has shown that most televised mass-market media is ineffective,<sup>23</sup> especially when not employed as part of an integrated strategy. Army Marketing will ensure the smart use of traditional channels by using the same integrated marketing approach that is reliant on detailed segmentation, data, and effective market positioning.

#### **Choosing the right advertising strategy**

Gen X and Gen Y Soldiers grew up learning about the Army through TV commercials: “Be all that you can be” or “Army Strong.” However, media consumption patterns are quickly changing. Army Marketing must therefore closely monitor where and how it advertises, consider cost/benefit trade-offs, and adapt to emerging methods. A recent study by the Chicago Booth School of Business found: “for almost three-quarters of all [television advertising] campaigns, their effect on sales is statistically indistinguishable from zero.” Similarly, a Nielsen study found that most Chief Marketing Officers find digital strategies to be more effective than traditional methods. Thus, Army Marketing strategies and initiatives must be guided by recent developments in marketing and sound research rather than past strategies.

Sources: “Coming right up after the break ... why most TV ads are a waste of money,” Frederik, Jesse, 04DEC19 and “The Nielsen CMO Report, 2018,” Solomon, Eric, The Nielsen Company, 2018.

5. **Explore emerging channels.** The Army must regain its position as a leader in emerging marketing practices and channels. Many of the Army’s efforts in this area will initially focus on experiential opportunities. Similar to the *Army Experience Center* and the *America’s Army Game* of the 2000s, immersive experiences give people a better understanding of the Army’s mission and allow them to visualize themselves in these settings. Emerging trends of **experiential marketing** include the renewed emphasis on **museums** as a family activity and hobby, the increasingly popular use of **online gaming**, and interactive phone apps. **Podcasts** are another example of a cost-effective channel that could allow the Army to reach future Soldiers and their influencers in new ways, **using stories**. All of these channels involve an

<sup>23</sup> Frederik, Jesse, “[Coming right up after the break](#) ... why most TV ads are a waste of money,” 04DEC19.

interaction in which data is captured and exchanged, allowing the Army to measure their effectiveness.

- 6. Integrate educational & informational channels.** Finally, the Army's strategic marketing focus must look beyond lead generation and current accessions. The Army will need an increasingly diverse set of talents to populate its ranks. Cultivating and connecting with the American youth who

### Outreach

Army posts across the country hosts community events and sponsor outreach. These include youth campouts, open visitations to Army posts, air shows, and other events. While these events do not fall under deliberate marketing initiatives, they do present opportunities for the Army to engage, educate, and inform the public. As such, Army Marketing should be both a partner and critical stakeholder in these events.

possess, or who will possess, these talents requires **outreach and education**. Programs such as DoD's STARBASE and JROTC provide examples of programs that benefit society while helping develop the general population.<sup>24</sup>

- E. Steward and educate** – Army Marketing must create plans and approaches that guide how the Army will make marketing investments. These documents should be both well-conceived in their stewardship of resources and educational in their focus so that they can be easily understood throughout the Army Marketing and accessions enterprise. To accomplish this, Army Marketing will:

- 1. Serve as a marketing education resource.** AEMO has civilian and military marketing talent, often with significant practical experience or graduate degrees related to marketing. AEMO should provide this expertise as an educational resource at the regional level to assist local accessions commanders and directors. By serving as a resource, AEMO can help company and battalion level commanders better understand the Army's marketing strategy and develop strong and effective marketing plans.
- 2. Develop synchronized and integrated milestone-based Annual Marketing Plans.** AEMO will create Annual Marketing Plans (AMPs) that are

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<sup>24</sup> "DoD STARBASE focuses on elementary students, primarily fifth graders. The goal is to motivate them to explore Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) as they continue their education. The academies serve students that are historically under-represented in STEM. Students who live in inner cities or rural locations, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, low in academic performance or have a disability are in the target group. The program encourages students to set goals and achieve them."

synchronized and integrated across years, components, and echelons. These AMPs will be tied to specific objectives, metrics, and milestones, incorporating feedback from across the accessions enterprise.

3. **Use data-driven modeling and forecasts.** Army Marketing will use RAND's Recruiting Resource Model (RRM), Marketing Mix Modeling (MMM), and Multi-Touch Attribution (MTA) to inform the allocation of marketing resources. These models quantify and project the impact of marketing inputs on desired outcomes like awareness, engagement, and leads. Army Marketing will adopt, adapt, and develop internal MMM and MTA into their strategic decision-making process.

### **Determining the optimal use of resources**

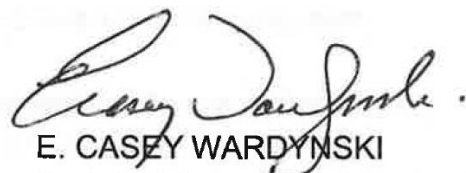
RAND studies from 2003 and 2008 determined that the cost of a properly executed advertising was \$10,000 to recruit one additional "high-quality male" recruit. In contrast, using recruiters it costs the Army \$15,000 to recruit one additional recruit; and using bonuses, it costs the Army nearly \$90,000 to recruit one additional recruit. Currently, RAND's Recruiter Resource Model estimates advertising to be more than 7 times more cost-effective than adding recruiters and up to 8 times more cost effective than "Quick Ship" bonuses.

Source: Dertouzos, James and Steven Garber, "Is Military Advertising Effective? An Estimation Methodology and Applications to Recruiting in the 1980s and 90s," National Defense Research Institute, 2003: tables 8.3 & 9.1, pages 88-89, and Dertouzos, James "The Cost-Effectiveness of Military Advertising: Evidence from 2002-2004," National Defense Research Institute, 2008, pages 38.

**V. CONCLUSION** – The *Army Marketing Implementation Plan* provides the framework and guidance to establish and manage an innovative marketing approach on par with the best companies in the world. By communicating the Army's employment brand and employee value propositions in accordance with industry best practices, Army Marketing will help the Army not just to **acquire** the talent it needs, but to **retain** it as well, thereby increasing overall Army readiness.



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